

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 070453
ORIGIN DHA-02

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TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 070453

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: CABINDAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE - VISIT OF UNHCR
ASSISTANCE DIVISION DIRECTOR JAEGER

REF; (A) KINSHASA 2499; (B) KINSHASA 1625; (C) KINSHASA
1163

1. DEPARTMENT IS SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED BY TONE, IF NOT
SUBSTANCE, OF JAEGER'S MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR (REF. A),
BUT AT SAME TIME IS DISTURBED BY POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF
JAEGER'S POSITIONS, WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED TO PRESAGE
CONTINUED WHITEWASH OF NOEL AND OBDURATE NONFEASANCE OF
UNHCR. SEVERAL VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ARISE FROM JAEGER'S
STATEMENT AND WE ARE MUCH CONCERNED THAT IT IS STILL NOT
POSSIBLE TO FORESEE HOW THIS VERY SEVERE HUMANITARIAN
PROBLEM WILL BE PROMPTLY RESOLVED, A RESOLUTION WHICH MUST
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 070453

BE ACHIEVED. THE BOTTOM LINE IS, AFTER ALL, SAVING THE
LIVES OF REFUGEES.

2. SINCE RECEIPT IN EARLY JANUARY OF THE WIESNER/ERJAVEC
IRC REPORT, WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET UNHCR TO ASSUME ITS
RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CABINDAN REFUGEES IN THE TSHELA
REGION OF ZAIRE. UNHCR RESPONSE HAS BEEN TO LAUNCH WHAT
TURNED OUT TO BE AN ABORTIVE TRIP BY IACOVOU IN JANUARY, A
VISIT BY NOEL IN FEBRUARY, AND A VERY SHORT VISIT BY
JAEGER IN MARCH.

3. U.S. HAS ATTEMPTED TO STIMULATE UNHCR BY PROVIDING IT THE EMBASSY REPORT MADE BY USAID PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER DR. JOHN KENNEDY (REF. B), WHICH FINDS THAT 17,000 REFUGEES IN THE TSHELA ZONE ARE IN NEED OF FOOD AND MEDICAL CARE, 8,000 IN NZOBE LUZI COLLECTIVITY AND 9,000 IN LUBOLO COLLECTIVITY. IN NZOBE LUZI COLLECTIVITY, WHERE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE MALNUTRITION IN ADULTS AND CHILDREN AND HIGH OCCURRENCE OF KWASHIORKOR IN WEANLINGS, THERE ARE ONE OR TWO DEATHS OF WEANLINGS A DAY IN KARYI-TEMBE CAMP, THE EQUIVALENT OF SIX TIMES THE ZAIRIAN NATIONAL AVERAGE CRUDE DEATH RATE. THE KUIMBA HOSPITAL IN THE SAME COLLECTIVITY IS SWAMPED AND CANNOT MEET DEMANDS. IN LUBOLO COLLECTIVITY, AT THE TOWN OF LUBOLO, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE MALNUTRITION, WITH FREQUENT EVIDENCE OF KWASHIORKOR AMONG THE CHILDREN, AND IN THE NORTH OF THE SAME COLLECTIVITY AROUND GANDA BEMBA, THERE IS MUCH MALNUTRITION IN INFANTS.

4. OTHER REPORTING CONTINUES TO INDICATE ACUTE NEED. IRC HAS INFORMED US THAT ERJAVEC REPORTS THAT 20-25 REFUGEES ARE COMING OUT OF THE FOREST EVERY WEEK AT GANDA BEMBA, AND THAT 10 PER CENT OF THESE NEWCOMERS DIE. BOTH ERJAVEC AND KALALA-TSHIDINGI, WHO ACCOMPANIED DR. KENNEDY TO TSHELA, REPORT THAT THESE ARE THREE OR FOUR PATIENTS PER BED IN THE KUIMBA HOSPITAL. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH DR. KENNEDY UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WERE ONLY ABOUT 1,000 CABINDAN
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 070453

REFUGEES IN THE GANDA-SUNDI COLLECTIVITY, ERJAVEC HAS HEARD OF ANOTHER 9,000 NEAR PALANGA NDENGA, WHICH HE HOPES TO VISIT ON HIS NEXT TRIP. THE CONDITION OF THESE LAST REPORTED REFUGEES IS NOT YET SPECIFIED.

5. IN THIS CONTEXT, MR. JAEGER RETURNS FROM A TRIP OF A DAY OR TWO IN THE TSHELA REGION, AND PROPOSES AN ACTION PLAN CONSISTING OF YET ANOTHER SURVEY TO EVALUATE THE NEEDS OF KARYI-TEMBE CAMP, NOEL HAVING VISITED IT IN FEBRUARY (REF. B, PARA. 7); PROVISION OF #ADDITIONAL" ASSISTANCE TO KUIMBA HOSPITAL -- NONE HAVING BEEN PROVIDED AS OF THE TIME OF THE KENNEDY TRIP; INCREASE OF ACTIVITIES IN THE ZONES OF LUKULA AND TSHELA; BETTER LIASON WITH IRC, ECZ, AND CATHOLICS; ALL THE WHILE RESTRICT- ING UNHCR AID TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE AT LEAST 20-30 KMS FRO FROM THE BORDER, AND CONCENTRATING UNHCR EFFORTS IN THOSE AREAS WHERE THERE ARE NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES.

6. AS WE READ THE MAP, GANDA BEMBA IS LESS THAN 5 KILOMETERS FROM THE BORDER (AS IS PALANGA NDENGA), KARYI-TEMBE CAMP AND LUBOLO ARE LESS THAN 10 KILOMETERS, AND KUIMBA ABOUT 15 KILOMETERS FROM THE BORDER. THESE AREAS, IDENTIFIED AS THOSE OF GREATEST NEED, WOULD APPEAR TO BE INELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE UNHCR AID UNDER THE 20-30

KILOMETER RULE MENTIONED BY JAEGER. CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, MOANDA, WHERE NOEL CLAIMS UNHCR HAS AN OFFICE (REF. C), ALSO APPEARS TO BE LESS THAN 20 KILOMETERS FROM THE CAMBINDAN BORDER. THE TOWNS OF TSELA AND LUKULA APPEAR TO BE 30 AND 40 KILOMETERS RESPECTIVELY FROM THE BORDER AND THEREFORE ACCEPTABLE TO JAEGER. DEPARTMENT REQUESTS THAT EMBASSY CORRECT THESE ESTIMATES OF DISTANCE IN ITS RESPONSE.

7. THE INFERENCE COULD BE DRAWN THAT JAEGER CONSIDERS IT SAFE TO CONTRIBUTE TO KUIMBA HOSPITAL, THAT HE IS RECOMMENDING AN EVALUATION OF THE NEEDS AT KARYI-TEMBE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 070453

CAMP RATHER THAN DIRECT ACTION BECAUSE OF ITS PROXIMITY TO THE BORDER, AND THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIS ESTIMATE OF 20-25,000 REFUGEES FOR THE WHOLE REGION VERSUS KENNEDY'S 35,000, WITH 23,000 IN TSELA ALONE, MAY REFLECT THE NUMBER JAEGER BELIEVES TO BE OUTSIDE THE 20 TO 30 KM LINE. IF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JAEGER'S AND KENNEDY'S ESTIMATES IS ONLY DUE TO DIFFERENT METHODS OF CALCULATION, THIS CAN BE SORTED OUT AS TIME GOES ON. HOWEVER, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT JAEGER DID NOT PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE AS TO WHAT PROPORTION OF THE REFUGEES WOULD QUALIFY FOR UNHCR ASSISTANCE ON THE BASIS OF THEIR NON-PROXIMITY TO THE BORDER. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION BASED UPON EMBASSY REPORTING THAT VERY LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES, INCLUDING MOST OF THOSE IN GREATEST NEED, WOULD NOT QUALIFY UNDER THIS TEST.

8. DEPARTMENT ALSO NOTES THAT JAEGER STATES "UNHCR WILL CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS IN THOSE AREAS WHERE THERE ARE NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES". WHERE ARE THESE AREAS? WOULD THESE AREAS ALSO BE 20-30 KM FROM THE BORDER? WILL CONCENTRATION ON NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES LEAVE UNSOLVED THE SEVERE PROBLEMS WHICH WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO RESOLVE FOR THE PAST MONTHS?

9. SINCE JAEGER IS CONCERNED WITH POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS IN THE EVENT OF UNHCR ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES TOO CLOSE TO THE CAMBINDAN-ZAIREAN BORDER, DEPARTMENT WONDERS WHAT OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS HE MAY HAVE MADE IN THIS RESPECT?

IS UNHCR PRESSING FOR RELOCATION OF THESE REFUGEES? IS SUCH RELOCATION PRACTICAL IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY OF LAND? IF THIS NOT PRACTICAL IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA, COULD THEY BE RELOCATED IN THE INTERIOR OF ZAIRE? IS UNHCR PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE RELOCATION COSTS? WOULD GOZ PERMIT RELOCATION? WOULD GOZ ASSIST IN SUCH RELOCATION? IS UNHCR PREPARED TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY CARE AND MAINTENANCE TO REFUGEES IN SERIOUS NEED WHO ARE LOCATED CLOSER THAN 20-30 KM FROM
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 070453

THE BORDER WHILE QUESTIONS OF POSSIBLE RELOCATION ARE RESOLVED?

10. FINALLY, WE NOTE THAT JAEGER PROMISES GREATER ATTEMPTS BY UNHCR TO MAINTAIN SATISFACTORY LIASON WITH IRC, ECZ AND THE CATHOLICS, ALL OF WHOM ARE PROVIDING RELIEF ASSISTANCE TO THE REFUGEES. THIS REMARK APPEARS TO ASSUME THAT PRIVATE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL RELIEF ASSISTANCE TO THE REFUGEES. DEPARTMENT WONDERS IF JAEGER ASSUMES THAT THESE AGENCIES WILL BE PROVIDING FOR THOSE REFUGEES WHOM HE CONSIDERS TO BE IN AREAS TOO CLOSE TO THE BORDER? IS THERE ANY UNHCR INTENTION TO FINANCE SUCH ACTIVITIES?

11. AGENCIES HAVE INFORMED US THAT IRC AND OTHERS STEPPED IN TO MEET THIS SERIOUS NEED BECAUSE UNHCR WAS FAILING TO DO SO. THEY HAVE INFORMED US THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE THE FUNDS TO MAINTAIN THIS LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE IN THE FUTURE, AND HAVE RAISED THE IDEA OF RECEIVING FUTURE FINANCING FROM UNHCR. IT HAS BEEN THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSUMPTION THAT, ONCE HUMANITARIAN NEED WAS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED, THE UNHCR WOULD PROCEED PROMPTLY TO PROVIDE SUCH ASSISTANCE. IT WAS ON THIS BASIS THAT THE US CONTRIBUTION OF \$1 MILLION WAS RECENTLY PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S SPECIAL APPEAL FOR AFRICAN PROGRAMS. THIS AMOUNT WAS LEFT LARGELY UNEARMARKED IN ORDER TO GIVE THE UNHCR THE FLEXIBILITY TO RESPOND TO NEW, URGENT AND IMPERATIVE NEEDS AS THEY ARE IDENTIFIED.

12. AS A FOOTNOTE, DEPARTMENT IS PLEASED THAT UNHCR HAS BEGUN DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD TO THE REGION, WHICH BEARS NOEL OUT IN HIS REMARKS OF MARCH 2 (NOEL-GRIGG-KENNEDY MEMCON). WE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF FOOD, THROUGH WHAT AGENCY, AND TO WHAT AREAS THE 24 TONS OF FOOD MENTIONED BY JAEGER WAS DISTRIBUTED. WAS IT FROM THE AIDR GRAIN STORE IN MOANDA?
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 06 STATE 070453

13. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE EMBASSY COMMENTS ON WHETHER JAEGER'S CONTACTS LIMITED TO THOSE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR USED BY NOEL. DID JAEGER ALSO CONTACT BUKASSA, COUNSELOR IN CHARGE OF ANGOLAN REFUGEES, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY? IS THAT OFFICE STILL FUNCTIONING?

14. FOR KINSHASA: DEPARTMENT UNDERSTANDS PRESENT DEMANDS ON EMBASSY, BUT IF POSSIBLE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY COMMENTS ON THE FOREGOING, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE LOCATION OF REFUGEE POPULATIONS IN THE

TSHELA REGION, EMBASSY'S ESTIMATE OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH JAEGER'S PROPOSED COURSE WILL MEET CURRENT HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS OF CABINDAN REFUGEES, AND POSSIBILITY OR FEASIBILITY OF RELOCATING THEM. PLEASE PROVIDE ESTIMATE BY IMMEDIATE MESSAGE TO DEPARTMENT AND GENEVA.

15. FOR GENEVA: UPON RECEIPT KINSHASA'S MESSAGE U.S. MISSION REQUESTED TO SEEK URGENTLY CLARIFICATION OF UNHCR'S INTENTIONS IN THIS MATTER. OBVIOUSLY, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT JAEGER'S PROPOSALS MAY LEAVE A SERIOUS AND LONG STANDING PROBLEM UNSOLVED. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY UNFORTUNATE IF AT THIS POINT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WERE FORCED TO SEEK ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY FUNDS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR THIS NEED THROUGH PRIVATE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT THAT A SERIOUS NEED EXISTS AND MUST BE MET. IF UNHCR SOLUTION INCLUDES A REQUIREMENT FOR RELOCATION, WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE UNHCR'S CONCERN IN THIS RESPECT. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, IT NOW TIME FOR UNHCR TO SPELL OUT CLEARLY AND SPECIFICALLY WHAT IT BELIEVES HAS TO BE DONE IN ORDER THAT THIS WHOLE PROBLEM CAN BE MET, AND MET PROMPTLY;
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PAGE 07 STATE 070453

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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